

ORIGINAL

MEMORANDUM



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To: THE COMMISSION

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Arizona Corporation Commission

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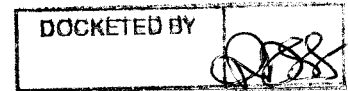
From: Steven M. Olea
Interim Director
Safety Division

2011 JUN 17 A 11:14

JUN 17 2011

Date: June 17, 2011

AZ CORP COMMISSION
DOCKET CONTROL



RE: IN THE MATTER OF THE APPLICATION OF THE MARICOPA COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION TO ESTABLISH A NEW GRADE SEPARATED PUBLIC RAILROAD CROSSING AT NORTHERN PARKWAY ABOVE THE TRACKS OF THE BURLINGTON NORTHERN SANTA-FE RAILWAY IN MARICOPA COUNTY, ARIZONA.

DOCKET NO. RR-02635B-11-0125

Background

On March 21, 2011, the Maricopa County Department of Transportation ("MCDOT") filed with the Arizona Corporation Commission ("Commission") an application for the establishment of a new public grade separated railroad crossing on Northern Parkway above the tracks of the Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railway ("Railroad") in Maricopa County ("County"), Arizona.

Geographical Information

This new grade separated structure will be located in the County, with adjacent land belonging to the City of Glendale ("City"). Per the City's website the population according to the U.S. 2010 Census is 226,721.

The proposed grade separation will traverse a spur line named "Luke Spur" and 143rd Avenue. The spur formerly served Luke Air Force Base, but is no longer in service. The spur line parallels 143rd Avenue in a north/south direction. There is no existing at grade-crossing at this location.

NORTHERN PARKWAY

The future 12.5 mile segment of Northern Parkway extending between State Route ("SR") Loop 303 and US 60/Grand Avenue will traverse along the current Butler Road alignment between SR Loop 303 and Litchfield Road north of Luke Air Force Base and then shift southeastward along the current alignment of Northern Avenue through the jurisdictions of the County, El Mirage, Peoria and the City. (See Appendix "A") The new grade separated structure at the Railroad will provide for a total of seven lanes with three lanes eastbound and westbound along with an acceleration lane in the westbound direction. The estimated cost for the grade separated structure is \$1,882,075. Federal funds will be used to fund 70% of the grade separated structure totaling \$1,317,453. The remaining 30% will be funded from local sources including MCDOT, the City, the City of Peoria and the City of El Mirage. The Railroad is not

contributing to the cost of the project because there is no existing at-grade crossing being eliminated. In mid May 2011, utility crews began relocation of utilities in preparation of the road construction. Road construction is scheduled to begin in August 2011, with completion in September 2012.

The posted speed limit on 143rd Avenue that parallels the spur track is 15 MPH. The nearest public crossing is Olive Avenue. It is approximately half a mile north of the proposed project site and is an at-grade crossing.

Train Data

Data provided by the railroad to MCDOT regarding train movements through this area are as follows:

Train Count: 1 to 2 trains per week

Train Speed: 10 mph freight

Thru Freight/Switching Moves: switching movements only

Schools and Bus Routes

The project site is in the Dysart Unified School District, No. 89. The following schools are part of this district within the project area:

- ✓ Dysart High School, 11425 N Dysart Road, El Mirage.
- ✓ Valley Vista High School, 15550 N. Parkview Pl., Surprise.
- ✓ Luke Elementary School, 7300 N. Dysart Road, Glendale.
- ✓ Dysart Elementary School, 12950 W. Varney Road, El Mirage.
- ✓ Rancho Gabriela Elementary School, 15272 W. Gabriela Drive, Surprise.

Per a phone conversation with Tracy Keily of the Dysart Unified School Transportation Division, 143rd Avenue is not part of the school district's bus route. The closest bus stop is at 143rd Avenue and Olive Avenue.

Hospitals

The nearest hospitals to the proposed project site are:

- ✓ Banner Del E Web Medical Center, 14502 W. Meeker Blvd., Sun City.
- ✓ West Valley Hospital, 13677 W. McDowell Road, Goodyear.

Hazardous Materials

MCDOT gave the following response when asked about hazardous materials crossing this crossing:

N/A

Zoning

Staff requested MCDOT to provide information regarding the type of zoning in adjacent areas from the crossing. The following was its response:

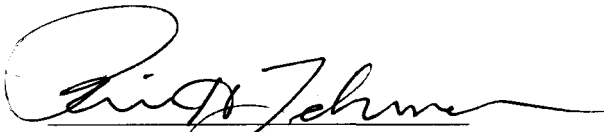
The parcels immediately surrounding the crossing are identified as AD-2 Airport District per county and restricted due to the proximity of Luke Air Force Base. Parcels to the west and to the north of the crossing are identified as Rural-43 Rural Zoning District – 1 Acre per dwelling unit. Currently the area to the west of the tracks is farm land but industrial park development is anticipated. Areas to the north and east of the tracks are currently residential.

Grade Separation

In the area of the project site, Northern Parkway is to be fully access controlled with grade separated crossings proposed at each cross road between SR Loop 303 and 115th Avenue. No access will be provided at 143rd Avenue which parallels the Railroad's tracks; therefore a grade separated crossing is the preferred alternative.

Staff Conclusions

Having reviewed all applicable data, Staff supports MCDOT's application. Staff believes the grade separation is in the public's interest and is reasonable. Staff believes that the measures proposed by MCDOT are consistent with other similar grade-separated crossings in the State and will provide for the public's safety. Therefore, Staff recommends approval of MCDOT's application.

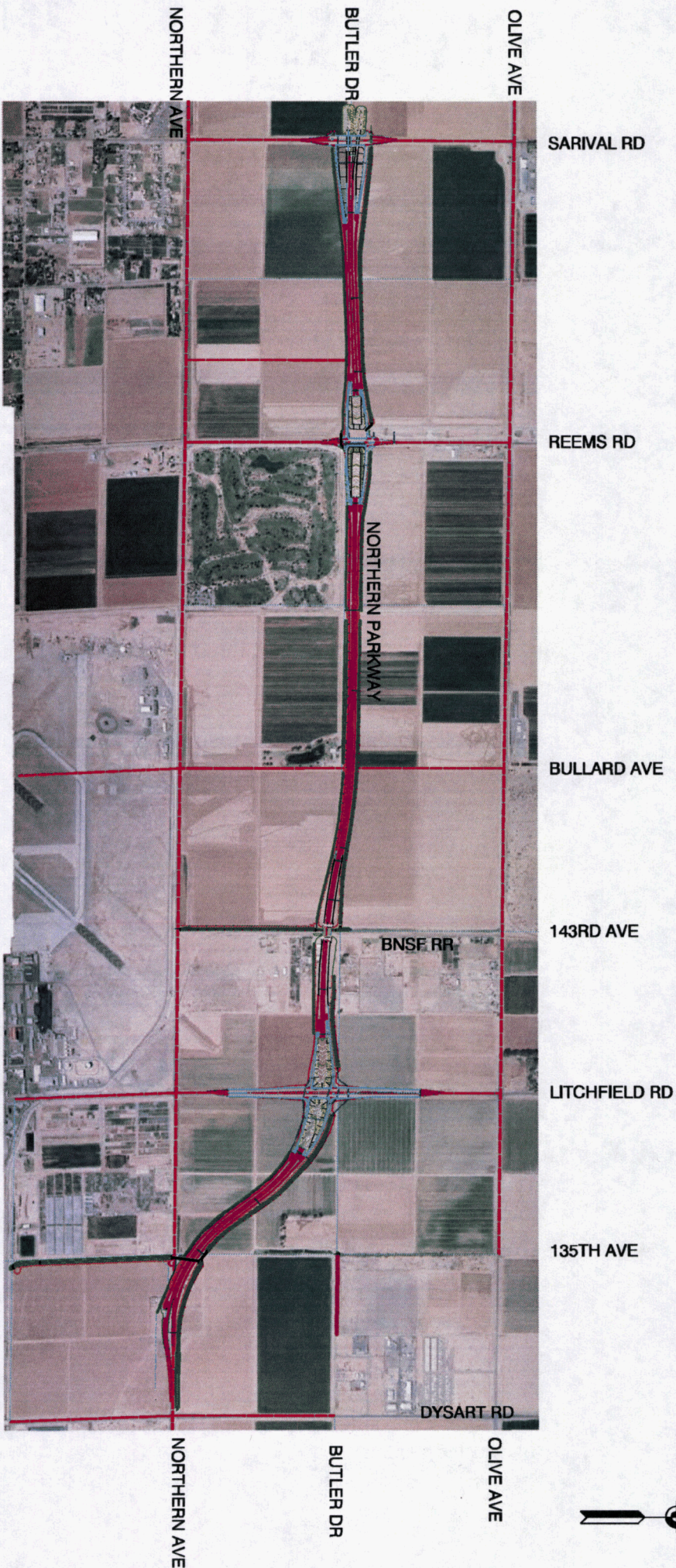
A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Brian H. Lehman", written over a horizontal line.

Brian H. Lehman
Railroad Safety Supervisor
Safety Division

Originator: BHL

“Appendix A”

NORTHERN PARKWAY PROGRAM MCDOT PROJECT NO. TT195 SARIVAL AVE TO DYSART RD



COPIES of the foregoing mailed
This 17th day of June, 2011 to:

Docket No. RR-02635B-11-0125

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